

Policy for APHIS Supervisors, Managers, and Executives

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why is this kind of a Training Policy necessary?

Ans: The Federal Government considers supervision and management as essential occupations for the effective and efficient organization and delivery of its services to the public. The need for supervisors and managers to develop and maintain current and effective human resource management skills is continually emphasized by the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). As a result, OPM has identified 27 core competencies, known as leadership competencies, which all Federal supervisory, management, and executive training and development should address. This kind of a Policy reemphasizes the agency's commitment to allocate the necessary resources to assure that supervisors, managers, and executives obtain and maintain current in the required skills and more directly focuses training and development on specific individual needs.

2. You mentioned that the Policy will go into affect in my Program when we transition from the Pass-Fail System to the 5-Level System. What are the planned transition dates for my Program?

Ans:

<u>APHIS Program</u>	<u>Last 2-level rating cycle</u>	<u>Begin first cycle under multilevel</u>
Administrator's Office	Oct. 1, 2004 - Sept. 30, 2005	Oct. 1, 2005
Animal Care	May 1, 2004 - Apr. 30, 2005	May 1, 2006
MRP Business Services	July 1, 2004 - June 30, 2005	July 1, 2005
Policy & Program Development Biotechnology Regulatory Services	Sept. 1, 2004 - Aug. 31, 2005	Sept. 1, 2005
Legislative and Public Affairs International Services Wildlife Services	Oct. 1, 2004 - Sept. 30, 2005	Oct. 1, 2005
Plant Protection and Quarantine Veterinary Services	Jan. 1 - Dec. 31, 2005	Jan. 1, 2006

3. Twenty-four hours of development annually is a lot of time spent away from the office that I don't have. Do you have suggestions for methods other than classroom training that I can use to gain the learning I need?

Ans: Training and development needs can be met through a wide variety of ways, including: formal classroom training, on-line training, reading a book, taking a temporary detail or shadowing assignment, CD ROM, DVD, attending lectures, etc. , or a combination of the above, as long as the learning that takes place meets the needs identified in the individual's assessment and learning contract or IDP.

4. You explained that I will be responsible for taking a 360-Degree (Multilevel) Assessment every 5 years. Can you explain what this is, where I can take it, and what the costs are?

Ans: A 360-Degree Assessment is used to measure various competencies and identify potential developmental needs for individuals. These skills, abilities, strengths, weaknesses, and needed competencies are measured from several perspectives: the employee, the supervisor, peers, direct reports, and/or customers. There are many different assessment instruments that can be used. The Training and Development Branch (TDB) can provide recommendations about several different instruments from which you can choose. However, you are not limited to just these choices. You may select another one better suited for your personal needs if you choose to do so. Instruments differ in price but usually range between \$100 - \$300 per assessment for each individual. Assessments are arranged for and paid by each participant/requesting office.

5. I now have to develop an annual Development Plan. What does this look like?

Ans: Annually, each experienced supervisor, manager, and executive should prepare a development plan, i.e., learning contract, Individual Development Plan (IDP), with his/her supervisor. The plan, as a minimum, should address one or more of those specific areas needing attention as identified in the assessment.

More information and examples of the Learning Contract and the IDP can be found on the Training and Development Web page as follows:

Learning Contract: http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/non_technical_training

IDP: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/mrpbs/forms/ad/ad881.pdf>

6. As a supervisor, this feels like more work. How does this Policy help me?

Ans:

- . Policy underscores the importance APHIS places on continual learning and the commitment it makes to assure that employees have the necessary skills, knowledge and abilities they need.**
- . Training and development shifts more to meeting individual and concrete needs as identified by objective assessment.**
- . Development of IDP's or learning contracts becomes more systematic and is based on concrete identifiable needs, as discussed and agreed upon with supervisor and provides a specific development strategy for each employee.**
- . Individual learning and development can be accomplished through a wide variety of avenues and options.**
- . Implementing the policy has the potential to strengthen communications between supervisors and employees and among employees.**
- . Providing a mechanism for employees (subordinates and peers) to provide feedback to supervisors in a non-threatening and trust-building way.**
- . Requiring a minimum number of targeted development hours each year strengthens supervisory, managerial and executive level skills and self-awareness.**

7. Do all supervisors, managers, and executives follow the guidelines of this Policy or is the Policy just for the more experienced supervisor?

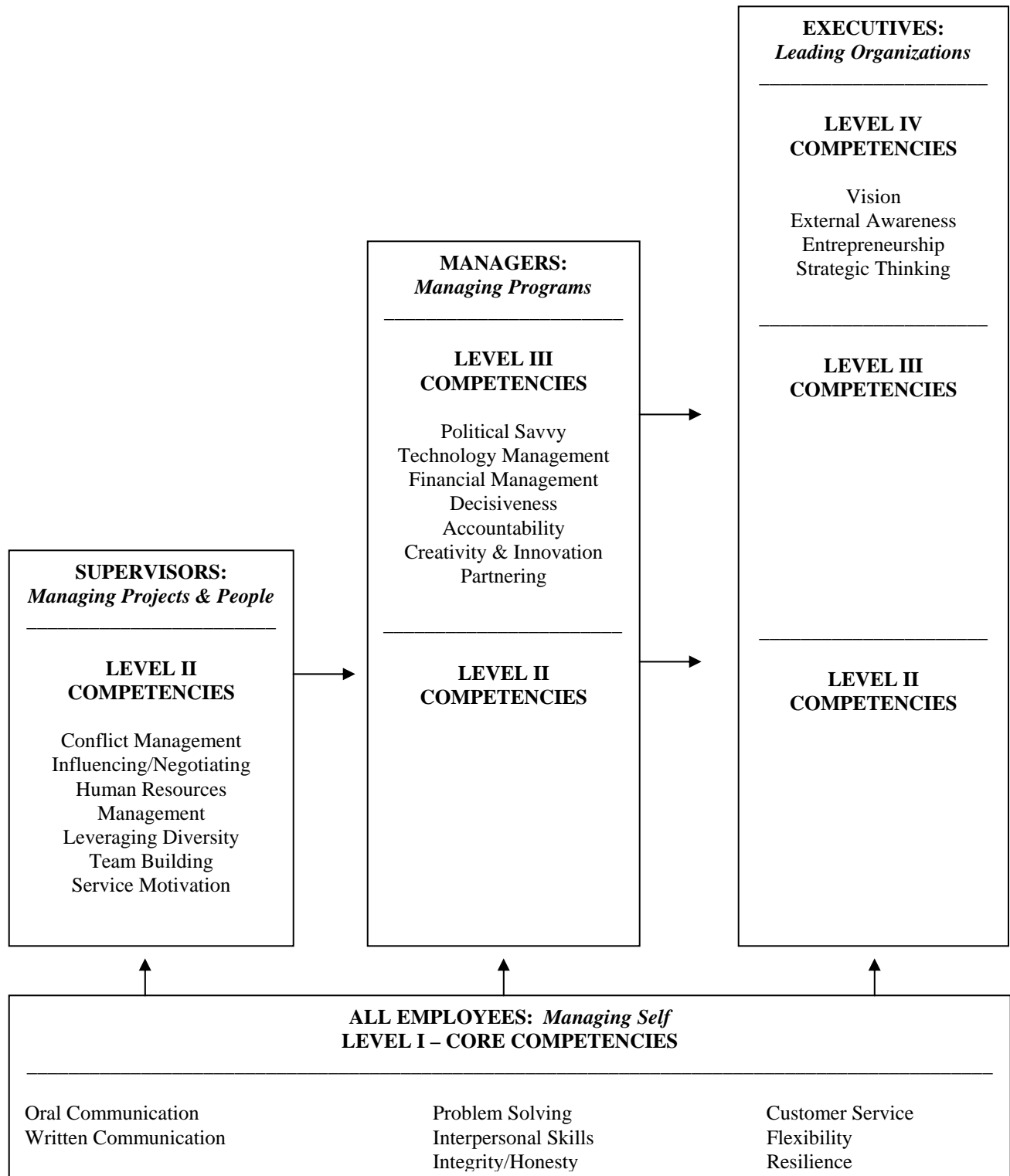
Ans: All supervisors, managers, and executives must follow the guidelines of this Policy.

8. You mentioned that there are 27 core leadership competencies that serve as the basis of supervisory and managerial training and development for APHIS employees and that we must adhere to these competencies during the learning process. What is a Competency and what are the 27 'core' competencies?

Ans: A competency is a cluster of related knowledge, skills, and abilities that can be measured against standards that are necessary to produce required outcomes and that directly correlate with performance on the job.

The 27 core leadership competencies follow:

APHIS Leadership Effectiveness Framework (LEF)



9. I don't always have the money to provide training for my people? What do I do if my budget just doesn't allow paying training expenses?

Ans: There are many avenues that can be used to provide learning and development experiences to your employees that don't require significant "out-of-pocket" expenses. Some examples: Cross-Training your employees; committee chair positions; collateral duty positions; read a book; attend a lecture; take free on-line training courses; etc.

10. If, as a part of a developmental program, I already did a 360-Degree assessment 3 years ago, do I need to do another one now.?

Ans: No, one is required every five years, so you are good for another 2 years. However, to satisfy the 24 hours of annual development requirement, you should focus on satisfying any needs that came out of that assessment for the next 2 years.

11. How does anyone know if I satisfy the requirements of this policy?

Ans: Each year, your supervisor will certify as part of the annual performance appraisal that you have completed the required assessment and that you have completed, or are in the process of completing the associated development/training.

12. How many people will see the results of the 360 Degree assessment that I do...that is, who will have access to the final report that I get?

Ans: Only the employee for whom the assessment is done will see the results. The results are private and confidential. However, when developing the annual IDP or learning contract with the supervisor, it is highly recommended that the results (at least in a general way) be shared at that time so that the supervisor and employee can agree on what the necessary development experiences are. Many supervisors/managers also find it useful to share some/all of the results with their direct reports/peers or others with whom they interact. This however, is a personal decision and although may be a good idea to do, is left up to the person being assessed.